

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO†

EXCERPTS FROM OUR STATE MEDICAL JOURNAL

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From Some Editorial Notes:

Variola and Varicella in San Francisco.—According to a recent publication of the United States Public Health and Marine Hospital Service, smallpox is and has been for the past few years quite prevalent throughout the United States. While the disease is of a mild type, and the mortality with few exceptions low, still it behooves us in California in general, and San Francisco in particular, to be constantly on our guard, and to in every way co-operate with the local and state Boards of Health in their endeavors to eradicate the disease.

During the year 1909 over 24,000 cases were reported in the United States, with a mortality ranging from .10 per cent to .50 per cent in most localities up to as high as 20 per cent in Norfolk, Va., and even higher in a small epidemic in South Carolina. The figures for the State of California are incomplete, but the records of the San Francisco Isolation Hospital show that since 1900 an annual average of 124 cases have been treated, with a mortality of less than one-quarter of one per cent for the past four years. . . .

The Exceptional Child.—In another part of this JOURNAL we publish the very excellent set of record blanks devised by Doctor Grossmann for investigating the physical and mental potentialities of children. Doctor Grossmann in an address to the San Francisco County Medical Society made evident the great importance of a better understanding of child development, and claimed that 25 per cent of our children depart from the normal. . . .

Disinfection of the Skin.—In the performance of our ordinary surgical operations the possible sources of contamination are the hands of the surgeon, the materials used (instruments, ligatures and sutures, dressings, etc.) and the skin of the patient. By the employment of reasonable care, rubber gloves, gowns and masks, and the usual methods in vogue for the sterilization of our instruments, ligatures and dressings, the surgeon and his materials are rendered reasonably safe. The skin of the patient alone remains. . . .

From an article on "Abnormal Body Temperatures in Injuries of the Cervical Spinal Cord" by Ray Lyman Wilbur, M.D., San Francisco.

The essential clinical features of the case which gave rise to this paper were a sudden, complete and unvarying paralysis and anesthesia of all parts of the body supplied from below the level of the fourth cervical cord segment, diaphragmatic respiration, absence of the sphincter and all other body and limb reflexes except the plantar, which was at times exaggerated, transient priapism, and high temperature with slow pulse rate, all the result of a fracture dislocation in the cervical region. (See paper of Dr. T. M. Williams, *Journal American Medical Association*, July 22, 1911, p. 283, for full case report.) . . .

From an article on "Treatment of Nevus Vascularis by the Use of Carbon Dioxid Snow" by D. Friedlander, M.D., San Francisco.

Within the last ten years, or, more properly speaking, within the last five years, for it is only within that time that it has been brought into practical use, a new remedial agent has taken a definite place in dermatology.

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† This column strives to mirror the work and aims of colleagues who bore the brunt of Association work some twenty-five years ago. It is hoped that such presentation will be of interest to both old and new members.

*As stated on page 355 of the September, 1911, issue of the *California State Journal of Medicine*, owing to the illness of its editor, Dr. Philip Mills Jones, the *Journal* was brought out by the Publication Committee.

BOARD OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA†

By CHARLES B. PINKHAM, M.D.
Secretary-Treasurer

News

The results of the written examination held in San Francisco July 7 to 9, inclusive, show 146 graduates of medical schools passed the examination, together with thirteen chiropodists and three drugless practitioners. The highest mark (90 6/9 per cent) was made by Kenneth H. Abbott, M.D., Ontario, California, a graduate of the College of Medical Evangelists, June 21, 1936.

A total of 116 applicants took the written examination given in Los Angeles July 21 to 23, inclusive. Altogether, 101 physicians and surgeons passed, together with two chiropodists and one midwife. The highest mark (89 per cent) was made by Oscar Weiss, M.D., Los Angeles, California, a graduate of Rush Medical College, Chicago, Illinois, June 15, 1936.

The many years of effort of the California Board of Medical Examiners in the investigation and prosecution of eyesight swindlers gives promise to be brought to a satisfactory termination because of the coöperation of the United States Post Office inspectors. Said the San Francisco *Examiner* of September 18, 1936: "Dealing a smashing blow at what they describe as 'the most vicious band of racketeers in the nation,' postal inspectors tonight had seized thirty fake eye surgeons and wrecked a \$5,000,000-a-year bogus medical business. The arrest climaxed an investigation extending over a year. The names of those seized have been withheld by postal officials, pending further arrests within the next week. . . ." An article on the eyesight swindlers, compiled by Secretary Pinkham, was printed in the annual report of the Board of Medical Examiners for 1930. A supplemental pamphlet on this subject was published by Secretary Pinkham in 1933. (See Bulletin of the Federation of Medical Examining Boards, 1933, p. 46.) The secretary of the Texas Board of Medical Examiners has also waged an active warfare against this group of swindlers. Commenting on the activities of the eyesight swindlers, the Santa Rosa *Press-Democrat* of August 9, 1936, in an editorial headed "Their Crime Contemptible," said: "In trading on the credulity and hopes of sufferers from disease in any form, quacks and other deceivers are guilty not only of obtaining money by false pretenses, but of cruelty in one of its worst forms. No mental agony is greater than having the cup of hope dashed from the lips of a person seriously afflicted in body. . . . In this day it is hard to understand how anybody will give a large amount for supposed medical service to any 'practitioner' without knowledge as to his professional standing. Such incidents belong in the category with the criminal activities of organized gangs who pretend to grow gold in flower pots."

Thomas P. Hunter, who passed with a high rating the examination for inspector of the Board of Medical Examiners, recently given by the State Division of Personnel, was on September 1, 1936, appointed inspector for the Board of Medical Examiners for the Northern California District, to succeed Harry G. Henderson.

"Medical and hospital insurance for more than 40,000 California Credit Union members, including 7,500 San Francisco salary and wage-earners, is being planned by the California Credit Union League, it was revealed today by Leo H. Shapiro, attorney, chairman of directors.

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† The office addresses of the California State Board of Medical Examiners are printed in the roster on advertising page 6.